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English 375

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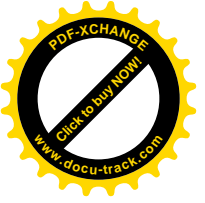
March 6, 2010

### The Vindictive Fowl: A Summary

The Vindictive Fowl, was part of a compilation of stories entitled ' Fables, Legends, and Songs of Chitriil,' collected by H. H. Sirdar, Nizaoi-ul-Mulk, Kaja of Yasin, and by Dr. G. W. Leitner. These men translated this story from Persian and Chitriil. It first appeared in *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review* on February 28, 1891. The story is about a fowl who goes through everything, and eventually disrupts everyone else's life just to get a coral back from a thistle. As these men indicate in their commentary, the story seems to reflect people borrowing from each other. The authors of most articles in *The Asiatic Review* discussed social and political issues more explicitly; however, this story fits into the context of the Review, because scholars see it as commentary on one of those issues, namely international borrowing (Leitner).

*The Vindictive Fowl*, foreign and simplistic though it may appear on the surface, is important to Victorian Literature because of what it represents for Britain and its people. As Britain expanded its empire around the globe, these kinds of stories allowed the common people to experience these new and exciting worlds. They were particularly important for women; the writings of Kipling, Trollope, Bird and others, these stories provided them with temporary escape from the constraints of domestic life (Henderson and Sharpe).

Gottlieb Wilhelm Leitner, one of the primary translators of *The Vindictive Fowl*, was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1840 and was fluent in most European Languages by



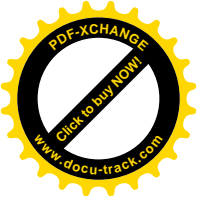
the time he was ten years old. At the age of fifteen, he served as an interpreter to the British Commissariat during the Crimean War. While serving as the principal of Government College at Lahore (now Pakistan), he founded many schools, libraries, and literary journals. He devoted much of his time to studying the culture of India and Pakistan. He even wrote a scholarly book in Urdu entitled, *The History of Islam* (Ahmada).

#### Works Cited

Leitner, G.W. "The Vindictive Fowl." Notes and Queries: Cumulative Nursery Stories (1891): 161.

Henderson, Heather and William Sharpe. "Perspectives: Travel and Empire." The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Vol. 2B (2006): 1889

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## The Vindictive Fowl

A Fowl sat near a Thistle, and opened a rag in which corals were tied up. Suddenly one fell into a thistle. The fowl said (the original text read 'taul' instead of said), "O Thistle, give me my coral."

The Thistle said, "This is not my business." The Fowl said, "Then I will burn thee." The Thistle agreed.

The Fowl then begged the Fire to burn the Thistle. The Fire replied, "Why should I burn this weak thorn?"

Thereupon the Fowl threatened to extinguish the Fire by appealing to the Water: "O Water, kill this Fire for my sake."

The Water asked, "What is thy enmity with the Fire, that I should kill it"

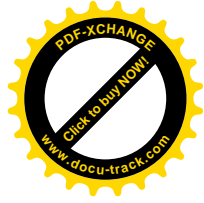
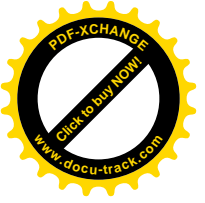
The Fowl said, "I will bring a lean Cow to drink thee up."

The Water said, "' Well!" But the Cow refused, as it was too lean and weak to do either (The original text reads: "EO").

Then the Fowl threatened to bring the Wolf to eat the Cow. The Wolf refused, as he could feed better on fat sheep. The Fowl threatened the Wolf with the Huntsman, as he would not eat the lean Cow. The Huntsman refused to shoot the Wolf, as it was not fit to eat. Then the Fowl threatened the Huntsman with the Mouse. The Huntsman replied: "Most welcome!" But the Mouse said that it was feeding on almonds and other nice things, and had no need to gnaw the leather skin [tie; query= water skin T\ of the Huntsman (This footnote was in the original scanned online version).

The Fowl then said, "I will tell the Cat to eat thee."

And the Mouse replied, "The Cat is my enemy in any case, and will try to catch and



eat me, wherever it comes across me, so what is the use of your telling the Cat?"

The Fowl then begged the Cat to eat the Mouse, and the Cat agreed to do so as soon as (The original text reads: "whenever" instead of 'as soon as') she was hungry. "But now," said she, "I do not care to do so." Then the Fowl became very angry, and threatened to bring little boys to worry the Cat, and the Cat said, "Yes."

The Fowl then begged the little Boys to snatch the Cat one from another from each other (**the original text reads: "from another"**), so that it might know what it was to be vexed. But the boys just then wanted to play and fight among themselves, and did not care to interrupt their own game. Then the Fowl threatened to get an Old Man to beat the Boys to which the boys said, "By all means."

But the Old Man refused to beat the Boys without any cause, and called the Fowl an idiot.

The Fowl then said to the Old Man, "I will tell the Wind to carry away thy wool." and he said: "Very well!"

And the Wind, when ordered by the Fowl, with its usual perverseness, obeyed, and carried off the Old Man's wool. Then the Old Man beat the Boys, and the Boys worried the Cat, and the Cat ran after the Mouse, and the Mouse bit the Huntsman in the waist [qu., the leather bottle at his waist], and the Huntsman went after the Wolf, and the Wolf bit the Cow, and the Cow drank the Water, and the Water came down on the Fire, and the Fire burnt the Thistle, and the Thistle gave the Coral to the Fowl, and the Fowl took back his Coral.